

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-5. (canceled).

6. (Currently Amended) A The communication connection merge method as set forth in ~~claim 4~~ claim 24, wherein said connection-oriented network is a multi-protocol label switching network, said communication connections are label switched paths, ~~connection is a label-switched path~~ and said node is a label switching router.

7. (Currently Amended) A The communication connection merge method as set forth in ~~claim 4~~ claim 24, wherein said connection-oriented network is an asynchronous transfer mode network, said communication ~~connection~~ connections are virtual channels, ~~is a virtual channel~~ and said tunneling communication connection is a virtual path, and said node is an asynchronous transfer mode switch.

Claims 8-14. (canceled).

15. (Currently Amended) A node which consolidates performing merge process for consolidating a plurality of communication connections having different destination nodes ~~in connection of a connection-oriented network at a node on the way of transfer route into a common communication connection~~, comprising:

a processor which determines means for making judgment whether a tunneling communication connection is present both in a first route of an ~~section where said existing communication connection and in a second route of a second~~ said new communication

~~connection have a common transfer route upon merging new communication connection on setting for existing communication connection;~~

~~wherein said processor modifies a means for modifying collateral parameter of said tunneling communication connection to accommodate merging said second merge the new communication connection for enabling accommodation of the new communication connection in said tunneling communication connection; and~~

~~means for performing merge wherein said processor merges said existing communication connection and said second new communication connection on said tunneling communication connection in a condition to be branched at a terminal point node after modification of parameter of the existing communication connection.~~

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16. (Currently Amended) TheA node as set forth in claim 15, wherein said existing communications connection is a tunneling communication connection ~~recursively repeats merge upper level tunneling communication connection to lower level tunneling communication connection for an arbitrary times in a condition capable of branching at the terminal node.~~

17. (Currently Amended) TheA node as set forth in claim 15, wherein said connection-oriented network is a multi-protocol label switching network, said communication connections are ~~connection is~~ a label switched paths, path and said node is a label switching router.

18. (Currently Amended) TheA node as set forth in claim 15, wherein said connection-oriented network is an asynchronous transfer mode network, said communication connection is a virtual channel and said tunneling communication connection is a virtual path, and said node is an asynchronous transfer mode switch.

19. (Currently Amended) TheA node of claim 15, wherein said processor performing merge process for consolidating a plurality of communication connection of a connection-oriented network at a node on the way of transfer route into a common communication connection, comprising:

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~~means for newly setting~~creates a tunneling communication connection capable of accommodating ~~collateral parameter of said existing communication connection, wherein said tunneling communication connection is in said first route and said second route and said new communication connection in a section where said existing communication connection and said new communication connection have a common transfer route upon merging new communication connection on setting for existing communication connection; and~~

~~means for performing merge said existing communication connection and said new communication connection on said tunneling communication connection in a condition to be branched at a terminal point node.~~

Claims 20-22. (canceled).

23. (New) The node of claim 19, wherein said second communications connection is a new communication connection.

24. (New) A communication merge method in a connection-oriented network which consolidates an existing communication connection having a first route to a first destination node with a second communication connection having a second route to a second destination node, wherein said first and second destination nodes are different, comprising:

determining whether a tunneling communication connection is present from a third node to a fourth node, wherein said third and fourth nodes are in both said first route and said second route;

modifying a parameter of said tunneling communication connection to accommodate a merger of said communication connections, if said tunneling communication connection is present; and

merging said communication connections on said tunneling communication connection.

25. (New) The communication merge method of claim 24, wherein said existing communications connection is a tunneling communication connection.

26. (New) The communication merge method of claim 24, wherein said method further comprises:

creating a new tunneling communication connection from a fifth node to a sixth node, wherein said fifth and sixth nodes are in said first route and second route, if said tunneling communication connection is not present.

27. (New) The communication merge method of claim 26, wherein said second communication connection is a new communication connection.